

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
Eastern Regional Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***** Save the Date*****

**MAINE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO HOLD BRIEFING ON HUMAN
TRAFFICKING**

What: Briefing of Maine State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

When: Monday, April 2, 2012, 9:00 a.m. ET

**Where: Wishcamper Auditorium, University of Southern Maine
34 Bedford St., Portland, ME 04101**

Washington, DC - The Maine State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will convene a public briefing to gather information from law enforcement, government officials, human service providers, advocates and community members on the issue of human trafficking in Maine.

Background: Human trafficking in the United States is an issue that is often misunderstood. The victims of human trafficking have many faces. They are men and women, adults and children. They are trapped in forced sexual or labor exploitation and are often subjected to horrible physical and sexual abuse. President Obama has called human trafficking modern-day slavery. Calling it a shared responsibility, the President urged that America "can and must end this most serious, ongoing criminal civil rights violation." The Attorney General echoed this concern, calling human trafficking a "cruel practice that persists on an enormous and alarming scale." General Holder said that combating the entrapment, abuse, and exploitation of trafficking victims is one of DOJ's highest priorities.

In Auburn ME, law enforcement and social service agencies tried to raise more awareness about the issue, holding a two-day conference on human trafficking in September 2011. Dan Perry, an assistant U.S. Attorney for Maine, said, "I think we all recognize we are at the precipice of something that can get much worse if we don't address it early on." Perry noted that although the slogan of this symposium was "not here" the unfortunate reality is, in fact, that "it is here." Subsequently, in December, a national advocacy group, which looks at laws dealing with sex trafficking of minors issued a report card in which Maine was given an F.

To better understand the issue, the Maine State Advisory Committee will hold a briefing to gather information on current efforts and ask what more needs to be done. The briefing is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Barbara de La Viez, Eastern Regional Office at 202-376-7533 or email bdelaviez@usccr.gov

The Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

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